



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STANDARDS

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National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2015

Hire only Licensed Lead-Safe Renovation Contractors to perform renovation, repair, or painting work if you own a home or operate a child-occupied facility built prior to 1978

National Lead Poisoning Prevention week is October 25-31, 2015. This year's theme is "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future." Sounds like something we can all get behind, right? But what does that mean and how do we get there?

Childhood blood lead screenings in Massachusetts have revealed lower childhood blood lead levels over time; a byproduct of education, outreach, and diligence by parents, pediatricians, and health intervention specialists. While the progress is commendable, there is still more work to be done. This year, the National Centers for Disease Control lowered the threshold blood lead level of concern for children *by half*, from the former ten micrograms per deciliter (10 µ/dL) to five micrograms per deciliter of blood (5 µ/dL). The lowered threshold dramatically increases the number of Massachusetts children recognized to be at risk of detrimental health effects due to lead exposure.

Fact: There is no "safe" blood lead level in children or adults, and there is no reason to consider it a tolerable, much less acceptable, hazard.

Without a doubt, the greatest risk to childhood lead poisoning is residential lead-based paint hazards which exist in pre-1978 housing stock. While other sources of lead can be found in toys and jewelry, residential lead-based paints remain the source of most investigations of lead-poisoned children. Accumulated residual paint chips and dusts cause irreparable harm to children under the age of six.

Many people ask, "If statistics show that childhood blood lead levels are dropping, then why do we need regulations and guidance for renovation work in housing and child-occupied facilities?" This is a great question to which there is an incontrovertible answer. While highly toxic lead-based paint was banned in 1978, it remains in an estimated 24 million housing units, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This presents a significant exposure risk for not only children but also adults, workers, and occupants. Lead dust and chips resulting from remodeling or painting are poison. Adults who work with leaded materials must protect themselves from lead hazards. Lead poisoning is a preventable medical condition, and preventing it is achievable now more than ever as proper clean-up of leaded dusts and debris is not difficult or time consuming.

During National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards (DLS) takes the opportunity to remind Massachusetts residents about the legal requirements by contractors to control lead dust incurred during residential renovation activities in pre-1978 residential properties and child-occupied facilities. See M.G.L. c. 111, §§ 189A through 199B, M.G.L. c. 149, § 6, and 454 CMR 22.00. The requirements of the regulations are simple: Contractors must contain their work area, minimize dust and debris as much as possible, and clean up after their work is completed.

A contractor who has taken the training, become licensed, and practices lead-safe work methods, is one who is conscientious about his/her work and the health and safety of those around him/her. Properly trained and licensed Lead-Safe Renovation Contractors are not only working in accordance with the law, they will protect you, your children, your pets, your property, and the environment. Hire only a licensed Lead-Safe Renovation Contractor for your renovation, repair, or painting work on your home or child-occupied facility built prior to 1978. For a list of licensed contractors, visit www.mass.gov/leadsafe.

The Department of Labor Standards provides education and outreach to workers, contractors and property owners. DLS also checks job sites to see that renovators have been trained, are licensed, and are performing the work in a lead-safe manner. For more information about lead-safe renovation regulations, deleading and adult lead exposures, please visit our website at www.mass.gov/leadsafe.

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